

**DRAFT MINUTES
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Holiday-Inn Lansing West
7501 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan
August 6, 2008**

Chairman Ranney called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 6, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan.

Members Present:

Dick Ranney, Chair
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair
Amy Spray
Sheriff Scott Strait
Peter Wyckoff
John Bernard

Members Absent

Larry Harrington

Department of Natural Resources (Department) Staff Present:

James Radabaugh, Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing
Andrew Turner, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing
Creig Grey, LED, Roscommon
Maureen Houghton, Grants Management, Lansing

USDA Forest Service Staff Present:

Rose Ingram, Huron Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

Welcome/Introductions

Board members, staff and audience introduced themselves.

MINUTES

Acknowledged Minutes of the May 7, 2008 ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

Mr. Moll made a motion, supported by Sheriff Strait, to accept the minutes of the May 7, 2008 Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board Meeting, as corrected. Motion unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS

ORV Plan Update – **Steve Kubsia**k reported he is pleased to announce Director Humphries approved the off-road vehicle management plan at the May Natural Resource Commission (NRC) meeting. He thanked the board, stakeholders, and the public for their input throughout the planning process. The plan can be viewed in its entirety on line at the DNR's Web at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Motorcycle Trail Director's Order – Mr. Kubisiak reported Director Humphries approved the Land Use Order of the Director (LOUD) at the May NRC meeting. The order regulates specific existing off-road vehicle trails by designating them as motorcycle use only. Department staff in cooperation with trail partners is implementing the plan and hope to have it accomplished by early September. He thanked the board, stakeholders, and the public for their input throughout the process.

Mr. Kubisiak reported he received field recommendation to re-designate the Silver Creek Motorcycle Trail as an ORV trail. This will not affect the LOUD. Some sections will require widening. Mr. Katona will work with trail sponsor organizations to accomplish necessary improvements.

Trail Expansion Update – Mr. Kubisiak reported the initial screening review process has begun on the trail proposals submitted by the Michigan Motorized Recreation Council (MMRC). A conference call was held with trail program staff and evaluation criterion was reviewed. He distributed the trail analysts' initial review comments to the board and requested Chairman Ranney provide them to the MMRC. Trail sponsor advocate contacts need to be identified and they should follow-up on priority proposals with the trail analysts. He noted trail proposals are received on an ongoing basis and a number are in process. The Department is developing an electronic trail proposal data base.

NEW BUSINESS

ORV Law Enforcement Grants Eligibility Criteria and Expenses – Maureen Houghton provided an overview of the ORV law enforcement grant program and review process. She distributed a copy of the revised grant agreement and activity report. She noted language was added to the agreement to clarify that enforcement activities should emphasize state-designated trails and other public lands, not road patrols. It was the consensus of the board that the new language is good and provides the flexibility needed to address local enforcement concerns on associated public lands off designated trails. Chairman Ranney and Sheriff Strait thanked Ms. Houghton.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Long-Range ORV Financial Plan Workgroup Update – Chairman Ranney reported the workgroup held their first meeting last Friday. He said it was a very good discussion and the group is working on a vision statement for what they want the program to become over the next ten years. Chairman Ranney asked the board and audience what they would like to see. Items discussed include: Need for wide ranging comprehensive, education, safety training, promotion and outreach. Need for conservation ethics, reduced environmental damage, increased enforcement, teamwork, and user group cooperation. Need for adequate amount of trail riding areas and opportunities that meet diverse user needs and satisfaction. Need for adequate funding for all aspects of the program to support long term sustainability.

House Bill 4323– Chairman Ranney announced his is pleased to report Governor Granholm signed HB 4323 into law (2008 PA 240). The act allows specific counties, townships, cities, and villages to adopt ordinances authorizing the operation of ORV on the maintained portion of streets and roads. Under the new law, counties must provide a 45 day comment period to their country road commissioners and the Department (if state forest land is in the county). County ordinances won't go into affect until approved by the county board of commissioners following this 45 day period. The Michigan Association of Counties developed a model ordinance for consideration by the Counties. A county road commission may close up to 30% of the miles of a road within a county or township to ORV operation to protect the environment or public safety. The law does not apply to national forests and users should abide by the Motor Vehicle Use Maps (MVUM). Discussion ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

Trail Analyst Vacancy -- **Mr. Radabaugh** reported interviews for the vacant trail analyst position in FMFM are occurring this week and the Department hopes to fill the vacancy within the next month.

STAFF REPORTS

USDA Forest Service – **Rose Ingram, Huron-Manistee National Forest** reported Barry Paulson has been appointed as the new Forest Supervisor for the Huron-Manistee National Forest and Sue Kocis is the new District Ranger for the Huron Shores Ranger District.

Ms Ingram noted that any forest service road considered for ORV use must undergo a mixed use analysis by a qualified Forest Service engineer and that the evaluation process will require additional review time.

Forest, Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM) – **Mr. Kubisiak** reported thirty three (33) ORV trail grants have been received to date. Grants Management is logging them in and FMFM will complete field reviews. Approximately 80% of the new ORV maps are posted on the Department Web site. Once all maps are complete the Web site will be improved and a press-release will be done. A contract with Michigan State University was approved to conduct an economic study for the motorized trails programs. The study includes both snowmobiles and ORV's. The study will be complete in the spring of 2110. The US Forest Service San Dimas Technology and Development Center is contracting with the Keweenaw Research Center at Michigan Tech University to develop signing guidelines for ATV's, motorcycles and snowmobiles. The total budget is \$290,000. The Forest Service is seeking financial assistance from the states. Michigan will contribute \$15,000 from the National Recreational Trail Program funds (RTP) toward the study.

Jim Radabaugh reported efforts to designate ORV Routes on Drummond Island are ongoing and will be expanded to include consideration of the forest road system. He noted that forest certification and other influences now require the Department to evaluate the forest transportation system from a more holistic perspective and must include recreation and land management considerations. In some respects it is similar to the Forest Service's national travel management rule. He noted the efforts at Drummond Island may be used as a model for the rest of the state.

Law Enforcement – **Lt. Creig Grey** reported provisions in 2008 PA 240 (HB 4323) include increased penalties for violations involving the using of an ORV to create an erosive condition, in wetland, and private land trespass. The fine ranges from \$200 - \$1000 and is a significant increase that is hoped to be a deterrent. He noted to date he has been notified by five counties with their intent to pass a local ORV ordinance. **Lt. Grey** announced Gary Hagler is the new Chief of Law Enforcement Division.

Cpl. Andy Turner recognizes there is room for improvement in the ORV safety education program. The program will undergo change as curriculum functions are transferred to the Office of Communications. He asked for the Board's patience and understanding during the transition. **Chairman Ranney** noted passed efforts of the ORV safety education workgroup that helped to develop the current curriculum and offered to meet with staff any time.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Mike Olmstead read the following statement: As you know the DNR issued the permit for the 2008 Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree as requested by the event organizers on May 2, 2008 after much input, discussion, and consideration by a number of interested parties, including local business and tourist interests, user groups, legislators, in addition to a number of Department divisions.

This year's Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree was held as scheduled, and was beyond a doubt another resounding success. The event sold out in early May, one of only four (4) Jamboree events out of a total of sixteen (16) to date that has sold out. We attribute the success of this event to a number of factors, but the most important is the venue itself. The unique blend of challenging and durable trails interspersed with world class scenic venues, combined with Drummond Island businesses and individuals alike that cater very successfully to all Island visitors, contributed heavily to the success of this event. Add to this an experienced Jeep Jamboree event staff that performs in an exemplary manner of managing and teaching both novice and experienced participants alike, it is not hard to see why this event does so well year after year. As a result of this single event we conservatively estimate that at least \$70,000 was spent directly on the Island itself this year, with an additional \$30,000 spent in the State of Michigan in travel expenses to travel to Drummond for this event.

We also had the pleasure to have Mr. Rob Katona, U.P. Trails Program Analyst, ride with us on the first day of this year's event. Mr. Katona was in attendance from the trail ride kick off at the morning driver meeting and rode with us all day. He had the opportunity to see four (4) of our eight (8) trail groups on the trail that day. Mr. Katona was extremely well received by our participants, and had many one-on-one discussions with the participants on his trail ride. In addition to making his own first hand observations of what the user community is looking for in an ORV Route system, he also observed how responsible ORV users actually use the trail system. Rob's attendance at this year's Jamboree built an immense amount of goodwill among the user group. We trust that Rob's experience will have a positive long term affect on full size ORV opportunities in the state, and also to publicly thank him again for riding along with us during the event.

As the local coordinator of the Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree, I would like to use this forum to publicly thank all the individuals within the Department that helped make this year's event the success that it was.

As a result of this event, it should not be too hard to see the importance and impact that ORV recreation has on Drummond Island, and the entire State of Michigan. To that final point, we truly and sincerely appreciate all the effort and work that has been performed to date on a Drummond Island ORV Route System, and we urge the Department to continue to work diligently to bring an ORV Route System to Drummond Island as quickly as possible!

Thank you for allowing me to address the board at this meeting.

Mr. Wyckoff made a motion, supported by Sheriff Strait, to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Next Meeting

November 5, 2008 Lansing Holiday Inn West

Public Present

Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree, Great Lake Four Wheel Drive, Drummond Island ORV Club

Ann Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree, Great Lake Four Wheel Drive, Drummond Island ORV Club

Lewis Shuler, Cycle Conservation Club of Michigan (CCC)

Greg Yager, CCC

Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Bob DeVore, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association

Thomas Dunn, American Motorcyclist Association D-14, Lansing Motorcycle Club